

Why and how to email college coaches

Emailing college volleyball coaches can be daunting and scary for high school volleyball players. As you can imagine, emailing coaches is time-consuming and stressful when you also have homework, club practice, weight lifting, studying ... whatever! It's one of the hardest things about the recruiting process. If you can manage it, it's a good sign that you can handle playing volleyball in college. Being a high school student-athlete and going through the recruiting process is like a mini-prep class for being a collegiate student-athlete.

3 reasons why it's so important to email college coaches

1. They NEED to know WHO YOU ARE, and they NEED to know that you have strong interest in their school and understand why you want to go there and play for their program. If coaches don't have this information, you're just a needle in a haystack waiting to be found.
2. Sending an email is HOW YOU START THE RECRUITING PROCESS WITH A SCHOOL and the best and easiest way to communicate with college coaches. You need to find out as soon as you can ... **do they need your position in your grad year?** If they respond, you can move forward in the recruiting process with a YES from them or a NO.
3. Emailing is the best WAY TO SEND VIDEO and KEEP CHECKING IN. Division 1 college coaches cannot respond to athletes directly until Sept. 1 of their junior year in high school. You can still begin emailing coaches as a freshman and sophomore, so they know who you are and can mark you down in their database to watch you play. Your club or high school coach can serve as your "go-between" because college coaches can't email, call or text you back except through your coach or a third party who is NOT your parent. Division 2 coaches can return your call or email after June 15th before your junior year, a little earlier than Division 1 coaches. Division 3 coaches can return your emails and phone calls anytime.

How to email college coaches

1. **Always have a professional, polite and excited tone in your emails, while letting your personality shine through.** I suggest starting with "Dear Coach XXX and Coach YYY" to the head coach and associate head coach or assistant coach.
2. **Look up the coaches' email addresses and research the program by searching/Googling.** For example, "Tennessee volleyball," then go to the volleyball website. Read about the program record, rank in their conference/in the country, accomplishments, roster. Watch video, go to the main academic website and make sure they have your major/area of study. You'll find the coaches' emails under the "Inside Athletics" tab and the "Staff Directory" in the drop-down menu. Scroll down to "Volleyball." Or you can search/Google "Tennessee Volleyball Staff Directory" to go straight to the emails.
3. Send the "**Intro Email with Video**" to the head coach and assistant coach and CC the 3rd coach, if there is one. When one of the coaches responds, reply back to that coach and "CC" the other

coaches. You always want the head coach to know your name, know about you and to know about communication that is going on between you and the coaching staff.

4. The **“Intro Email with Video”** will be the longest email you send because you are introducing yourself to the coaches. I like the emails to be organized by paragraphs like this:
 - Express your interest in their school and playing for their volleyball program. “I’m contacting you to let you know I’m very interested in attending (name of school) and playing volleyball for your program.”
 - Describe yourself, grad year, position, height, etc. Include the name of your club team and where you are from. List your high school volleyball accomplishments and awards, if applicable.
 - Talk about your academics, GPA, class ranking, student council (other notable activities), major or area you want to study. (Make sure the school has what you want to study!)
 - Explain why you want to attend that specific college and why you want to play volleyball for that specific program. (You should have good reasons or the school would not be on your list! This is where you have to do a little research, if you don’t know specifics about the school and the program.)
 - Let the coaches know where you will be competing. I like a short sentence and then a bullet-pointed schedule within the body of the email. You can add a personal sentence like, “I would love if you can watch my team and I play!”
 - Thank them for their time and say something like, “Please provide me with any information you may have concerning your needs for a (your grad year) (your position) and if you think I would be a possible fit for your program. I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your program!”
 - Sign off with “Sincerely” or “Thank you,” your first and last name with contact information below. Then, under your name, list your club coach and his/her contact information.

5. **The subject line should look like this:** DIANNE DENECOCHEA 2020 6’4” 6-Rotation Pin Hitter, GPA 3.8. The key is to highlight your strengths! If your approach jump touch is 10 feet or more, put that in the subject line along with your GPA (if it’s around 3.5 and up). If you’re about to compete at a qualifier, add that at the end of the subject line for **“Check-In/Update Emails.”** Here’s a good format to follow: YOUR NAME, GRAD YEAR, POSITION, HEIGHT (if helpful), GPA (if 3.5 and above), (NOTABLES - jump touch 10 ft. and up, etc.) - Competing at XXX Qualifier/JO’s/AAUs, etc. (if applicable)

6. Send **“Check-In/Update Emails”** leading up to tournaments/qualifiers/JOs/AAUs – anywhere that coaches could watch you play – **if they need your position in your grad year OR if they haven’t responded yet that they do or don’t.** Every batch of emails you send throughout your season (and even during high school season) after your **“Intro Email with Video”** is to ask them to watch you play at your next tournament, update them with new video, update them on a recent tournament, thank them for watching you play, etc. These are shorter emails that serve as reminders and reasons to email them and keep in touch. I like these emails to express your continued interest in their school and have you taking action or asking the coach to take action to move the recruiting process forward towards a call, visit, clinic...what’s happening next.

7. **If you receive an email from a college coach, always respond either the same day or the next day.** Thank them for the email and, after you have done your research on the school and are interested in continuing the recruiting process with them, send an **“Intro email with video”** that is tailored as a thank you response to them for contacting you.

8. **If you receive a generic, standard email or camp invite from a school that looks like it was sent to a lot of players, you should still respond right away – if you are interested in the school.** Thank them the same way I described in #6. If the coach asks you to fill out the **Recruit Questionnaire**, do it and send a separate email thanking them and letting them know you completed the questionnaire.

9. **Rule of thumb: always be the last one to make contact.** Never have the college coach be the last one to send you an email to which you never responded. Even if you are NOT interested in the school, thank them for reaching out and let them know you are pursuing other opportunities.

I hope this article helps to ease the stress that comes with emailing college coaches and that I have given you some direction and confidence as you move forward to proactively fulfill your dream of playing volleyball in college.

Good luck!